

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 NEA-06 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01

INR-05 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01 IO-10 /072 W

----- 023946

R 181353Z NOV 74

FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1047

INFO DIA WASHDC

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GERMANY

CINCUSAFE RAMSTEIN AB GERMANY/IN

CINCUSAFE LINDSEY AS GERMANY/INCF

CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON ENGLAND

CINCLANT NORFOLK VA

CINCUSAREUR HEIDELBERG GERMANY

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY BONN

COMUSFORAZ LAJES FLD AZORES

C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 5034

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PO

SUBJ: MORE ON CRISIS WITHIN PORTUGUESE MILITARY

REF: LISBON 5007

1. AS REPORTED REFTTEL, VARIOUS SOURCES HAVE REPORTED BREWING CRISIS WITHIN PORTUGUESE MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT. ALARM FIRST GIVEN BY ALVARO CUNHAL (LISBON 4937) IN NOV. 11 SPEECH IN WHICH HE WARNED OF NEW COUNTER-REVOLUTIONARY PLOT. THEREAFTER WAVE OF RUMORS SWEEPED COUNTRY, ACCOMPANIED BY UNCONFIRMED REPORTS
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OF GONCALVES' MENTAL ILLNESS AND TENDER OF RESIGNATION.

2. TWO SOURCES NOT CITED PREVIOUSLY (MARCELO REBELO DE SOUSA OF EXPRESSO, AND CAETANO DA CUNHA REIS OF CDS YOUTH WING) CONFIRM ESSENCE OF REPORT IN REFTEL. BOTH GIVE AS IMMEDIATE CAUSE OF CRISIS PRECARIOUS MENTAL HEALTH OF PRIME MINISTER. GONCALVES RUMORED TO HAVE BEEN UNDER SEVERE MENTAL STRAIN FROM LONG HOURS OF WORK AND IS SUPPOSEDLY ON VERGE OF NERVOUS BREAKDOWN, WHICH IS WHY HE HAS GONE TO NORTH TO REST.

3. SAME TWO SOURCES MENTIONED ABOVE SAY THAT THEY HAVE HEARD THAT PM OFFERED HIS RESIGNATION FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 15, PRESUMABLY BECAUSE OF HIS HEALTH, WHICH HAS LED TO A POWER STRUGGLE WITHIN AFM RIGHT AND LEFT FACTIONS OVER CHOICE OF SUCCESSOR, AS WELL AS OVER FUTURE DIRECTION OF AFM POLICY. AMONG ALLEGED LEADERS OF "RIGHT" FACTION WITHIN AFM IS LT. COL. RAFAEL DURAO, FORMER MEMBER OF COUNCIL OF STATE WHO NOW COMMANDS TANCOS PARATROOPS. LEFT LEADER SUPPOSEDLY MELO ANTUNES AND OTHERS. DURAO SAID TO HAVE GIVEN ULTIMATUM TO LEFTISTS TO BRING PROGRAM BACK TOWARDS IDEOLOGICAL CENTER AS CALLED FOR IN AFM PROGRAM, HSSBKS' WANTS TO MOVE ON LISBON.

4. NO ONE WITH WHOM WE HAVE TALKED HAS ANY CONCRETE IRREFUTABLE PROOF ABOUT "CRISIS" BUT ALL HAVE MORE OR LESS THE SAME VERSION OF THE RUMORS WE REPORTED EARLIER. NEWSPAPERS HAVE STATED THAT ALL CALM IN COUNTRY, AND HAVE PUBLISHED COMMUNIQUE FROM PCP, MDP, AND SOCIALISTS APPEALING FOR CALM AND VIGILANCE. PARTY COMMUNIQUE AND NEWSPAPER REPORTS HAVE TAKEN LINE THAT THERE NO REASON FOR CONCERN, BLAMING EVERYTHING ON UNFOUNDED RUMORS, THOUGH FRONT-PAGE BANNER HEADLINES ASSERTING NOTHING IS HAPPENING SEEMS A CASE OF PROTESTING TOO MUCH. EMBOFF WHO VISITED SPAIN THIS WEEKEND REPORTS THAT ARMY OFFICERS IN UNIFORM WERE STOPPING AND SEARCHING CARS ENTERING PORTUGAL FROM SPAIN (BUT NOT IN OPPOSITE DIRECTION) ON LISBON-BADAJOS AND LISBON-BEJA-SEVILLE ROADS WITHIN TWO KILOMETERS OF BORDER.

5. STATE OF PM'S HEALTH HAS BEEN SUBJECT OF RUMORS DURING LAST FEW WEEKS. CAMILO MENDONCA, FORMER VICE PRESIDENT OF NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, TOLD EMBOFF A FEW WEEKS AGO THAT HE HAD CONFIDENTIAL

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LEARNED FROM CONVERSATIONS WITH MEMBERS OF PM'S WIFE'S FAMILY THAT HE OVERWORKED AND ON VERGE OF BREAKDOWN (MENDONCA SAID PM HAD BEEN UNDER MEDICAL CARE BEFORE APRIL 25 FOR NERVOUS CONDITION). OUR CONSUL IN OPORTO TOLD US THIS PAST WEEKEND THAT A PSYCHIATRIST FRIEND WHO HAD WATCHED PM MAKE SPEECH IN OPORTO NOT LONG AGO BELIEVED FROM WHAT HE SAW THAT PM AT VERY LEAST UNDER SEVERE MENTAL STRAIN, AND PERHAPS SUFFERING FROM SOMETHING WORSE. LOCAL NEWSPAPERS, WHICH

USUALLY GIVE EXTENSIVE COVERAGE TO PM'S TRAVELS, HAVE PROVIDED ALMOST NO COVERAGE OF HIS "REST" TRIP TO NORTH. PM, WHO WAS TO HAVE SEEN SENATOR KENNEDY ON HIS ARRIVAL HERE TOMORROW, HAS CANCELLED OUT WITH EXPLANATION THAT HE WILL NOT BE BACK IN LISBON UNTIL FOLLOWING DAY.

6. COMMENT: OUTWARDLY LISBON AND APPARENTLY REST OF COUNTRY CALM WITH NO UNUSUAL TROOP MOVEMENTS. FACT THAT MELO ANTUNES LEFT FOR VISIT TO PARIS NOV. 17 SUGGESTS THAT ANY CONTINUING TENSION WITHIN MILITARY CONSIDERED SUFFICIENTLY MANAGEABLE TO BE HANDLED BY ONLY "TRIUMVIRATE" MEMBER NOW IN LISBON, MAJOR VICTOR ALVES, WHO RETURNED NOV. 16.
SCOTT

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ARMED FORCES, POLICIES, POLITICAL SITUATION, PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 18 NOV 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: CollinP0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974LISBON05034
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740333-0967
From: LISBON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19741135/aaaabdcsl
Line Count: 128
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: LISBON 5007
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: CollinP0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 06 MAY 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <06 MAY 2002 by cunninfx>; APPROVED <17 MAR 2003 by CollinP0>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MORE ON CRISIS WITHIN PORTUGUESE MILITARY
TAGS: PFOR, PO, ARMED FORCES MOVEMENT, AFM, (SALGUEIRO, SA CARNERIO), (ANDRESEN)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005